



ALMINRACH KELSDRANT

Solidarity transcends the differences caused by fear.

The excitement became smiles, and the happiness turned into an invitation. Enthusiastic about the upcoming tour, Brenda joked with Julian. “I will serve as a tour guide.”

They happily walked the few feet that separated them from the palace. The end of the road revealed the surprise, and the magnificent artifice made Julian’s heart alternate between feelings of fascination and disbelief. Born of marble and sculpted with the most exquisite inspiration, what towered before them was a work of colossal proportions and delicate details.

The Guardians slowed their pace to admire such grandeur. Brenda took a deep breath and proudly presented it to her pupil.

“Julian, this is Alminrach Kelsdrant, our palace.”

The surprised Guardian admired it in silence until he could speak. “It’s exactly the same as the Parthenon, only much bigger.”

“You’re right, Julian, but the age of our palace precedes the appearance of man on Earth. As you might guess, it served as the inspiration for such a magnificent building.”

“How is that possible?” Julian asked in amazement without lifting his eyes from the palace.

Brenda simply replied, “All in good time, Julian. What I can tell you is that, in Mikangly Greydalash, you’ll find many surprises and the origin of many things you’ve seen or read about on Earth.”

Julian nodded and continued to observe the palace in awe. The entrance was preceded by a series of broad steps made of marble. He counted at least fifty large, smooth, and round columns supporting a magnificent roof decorated with bright marble tiles. Wide-open windows exhibited immaculate glass panels. The ends of the cornices were decorated with two strange creatures that Julian had never seen before in his life. The palace’s façade exhibited realistic statues of men and women; they almost seemed to be alive. Brenda brought Julian out of his reverie to explain what he was seeing.

“These sculptures represent some of the Kimralch, and the beings you see on the ends are statues of our animals. The forests of Mikangly Greydalash are home to a diversity of amazing creatures, and little by little, you will come across them in your explorations.”

A group of three Guardians came out of the palace and caught Julian’s attention for a moment. They wore trench coats similar to Julian’s, but their swords were different. Walking up to Brenda and Julian, they greeted them with a solemn bow. Brenda and Julian responded in kind, and a second later, the three Guardians disappeared into thin air. Julian realized he faded just like them whenever he left that place.

The new Kelsdrant’s attention returned to the palace. The perfection of its whiteness flashed in his eyes, showing him its ancient beauty once again. Brenda pointed at the broad steps and invited him to climb up.

They ascended the stairs slowly until they reached the huge hall, which exhibited three big carved and polished wooden doors. Wide open, the doors seemed to welcome the new Kelsdrant.

The tour guide and her companion went in to begin the anticipated tour. The first thing they saw was a great hall with a

high ceiling and gleaming marble walls and floors that were traversed by hundreds of Guardians. Some talked among themselves, while others entered or left the innermost rooms located to the right and left.

Brenda pointed at two beautiful wooden double doors that were open.

“Julian, the first door you see is the entrance to the Hall of the Scribes and Writers, as I often call them. There, you will find ordinary gatekeepers, like me, who live here or on the Earth, and also many Kelsdrants who love the art of writing. They collect our adventures and return them eternally recorded for the future. They have permission from the Kimralch to enter the Hall of Mirrors, but I’ll tell you more about that later when I show it to you.”

They walked toward the entrance, and Julian peered in to see what was inside. He counted about a hundred fine wooden tables occupied by just as many Guardians who were absorbed with capturing magical words on paper. With each stroke, the readers became witnesses to history. All of them wore long blue robes and sandals of the same color.

A Guardian with beautiful black locks and bronzed skin approached and greeted them.

“Hello, Brenda, it is great to see you again.”

“Hi, Marian,” Brenda said. “I want you to meet Julian Fox.”

The two kindly shook hands, and Brenda continued her introduction.

“Marian is a Keshintarc. This is her home. A good part of our story has been written by her hands. Julian is our new Kelsdrant. I must say that he is an excellent swordsman and will surely give you a lot to write about.”

The new friends blushed at the exchange and thanked Brenda for her kind words. Then Marian spoke to the Guardian about his noble peers.

“Brenda has been very generous in her opinion of me, Julian, but the truth is that many hands besides mine have given life to the books in the library, so you’ll find a diversity of styles in the scriptures. Some scribes are more passionate than others, but they all capture the true facts, and that is the most important thing for you, the protagonists, and the readers.”

They said goodbye to the scribe after Julian promised to return when the opportunity arose. They continued their journey to the next room.

“Julian, this is our library.”

They went into a room even larger than the previous one. Huge wooden shelves covered most of the walls. These shelves contained such a quantity of volumes that Julian couldn’t even guess how many were there. The book collection, along with the impressive size of the room, made it clear that it was the largest library he had ever seen.

He looked at one of the top corners of the shelves and wondered how they got up there to take out or replace the books. He fixed his attention on the center of the room, seeing hundreds of elegant wooden tables occupied by Guardians just like him.

Many wore black trench coats identical to his, but others wore loose white shirts and pants that matched their shoes. The girls he saw wore beautiful robes that fell to the knee, some white, others blue, and all of them wore sandals that matched their respective colors. His eyes wandered over nearly all their faces to take in the multitude of colors, and that same joy was apparent on all of them.

He felt for the first time in his life the grace of brotherhood as Guardians of all races converged in one spirit: friendship. Amazed, he watched as they talked among themselves—Guardians who came from countries on Earth that had long ago been beaten down by their differences and where the war had won over the words.

A soft flash crossed Julian’s mind, letting him appreciate something he had not noticed before.

“Brenda. They are speaking one single language, and I understand everything!” he exclaimed.

Then, a new lesson, the most important thing that Julian would hear, came from the bottom of Brenda’s heart.

“Here, there are no barriers to impede connection and coexistence,” Brenda said wisely. “Neither the pettiness nor the human limitations that have spread so much suffering on Earth. The light shines in our hearts to offer the best of their very essence and receive the rewards of those around us. All those who are here have overcome the love of origin, race, color, gender, and creed. Reason has become infinite to transform itself into the essence of living in peace. Respect for life, freedom, and the greatness of others live in all of us. Equality prevails like an ancient treasure, and the generosity of understanding allows the miracle of the desired consideration of others. Mikangly Greydalash belongs to all the Guardians of the world, and they travel through it freely to save lives, no matter whose life is it. We are Kelsdrant because our real power doesn’t come from our strength or abilities, but the willingness with which we are born and from which we are able to die.”

The gratitude shone in Julian’s eyes, and a bow for his teacher showed he recognized her worth. A sweet voice greeting Brenda distracted them. Julian turned his head to see a beautiful young woman before him. Brenda once again made a formal introduction between the two.

“Julian, meet Sophie.”

“Sophie, this is Julian, our new Kelsdrant.”

A smile and a welcome hug took Julian by surprise. He felt immediately that he knew her from long ago, and trust was instantly born between them.

“Julian, Sophie—as we all call her here—is responsible for our library. She is a Keshintarc like me, but she lives here. In her, you